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Door County Public Health Department News Release

The Door County Public Health Department reports that public health officials in multiple states, with the assistance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are investigating a large outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections. There have been 50 laboratory confirmed cases with the same "DNA fingerprint" pattern in nine states (WI, CT, ID, IN, MI, OR, NM, UT and WA).

Prepackaged washed spinach is the most likely source. Additional investigation is necessary to determine the brand or brands of pre-packaged spinach involved. State and CDC investigators are working quickly with the FDA to gather information to take action to protect the public.

The FDA advises consumers not to eat any bagged spinach until the source of the bacterium is found.

The *E. coli* O157:H7 bacterium causes diarrhea that is often bloody and accompanied by abdominal cramps, but fever is absent or mild. The illness typically resolves within a week. However, some people, especially young children and the elderly, develop the hemolytic uremic syndrome, or HUS, which is characterized by anemia, kidney failure, and low platelet counts. The symptoms of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection typically appear from 3 to 8 days, but usually about 3-4 days, following exposure.

Rhonda Kolberg, Door County Public Health Director/Health Officer, advises anyone who believes he or she has the symptoms of *E. coli* to contact their health care provider.

In Wisconsin, there have been 20 cases reported in seven counties including Dane, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, and Waukesha. Of these cases, 17 are female and three are male. The age range is from 9 years to 78 years old, with a median age of 26 years. The dates of onset of illness range from August 26 to September 3. Of these ill individuals, 12 were hospitalized. Four ill individuals developed hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) and one individual has died.

More information regarding *E. coli* O157:H7 infections can be found at the following CDC webpage: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/escherichiacoli_g.htm or at the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services webpage at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/Communicable/factsheets/Ecoli.htm>